

Smite Me

In the book of I Kings we find a very odd story. A prophet went up to his neighbor and asked him to smite him:

I Kings 20:35: “And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour in the word of the Lord, **Smite me, I pray thee.** And **the man refused** to smite him.

As you can see, his neighbor refused to hit him – and I imagine that most of us would have done the same thing. After all, hitting innocent people is almost always a bad idea. Who wants to be guilty of beating someone up?

However, in this particular case, saying no was the wrong thing to do:

I Kings 20:36: “Then said he unto him, Because thou hast not obeyed the voice of the Lord, behold, as soon as thou art departed from me, **a lion shall slay thee.** And as soon as he was departed from him, a lion found him, and slew him.”

Since the man would not hit the prophet, a lion came and killed him. (Yes, he actually *died* because he didn't do it!) The prophet then found someone who was a lot more accommodating:

I Kings 20:37: “Then he found another man, and said, Smite me, I pray thee. **And the man smote him, so that in smiting he wounded him.**

38 So the prophet departed, and waited for the

king by the way, and disguised himself with ashes upon his face.”

Why did all of this happen? Well, the short version of the answer is that God had sent the prophet to condemn the king for being disobedient. In order to do this, however, the prophet needed to be wounded so that God could use him as an object lesson. It was therefore vital that the prophet actually be wounded – and in order for that to happen, someone had to wound him.

If you take another look at the first verse you’ll notice that when the prophet commanded his neighbor to smite him he did so “in the word of the Lord”:

I Kings 20:35: “And a certain man of the sons of the prophets said unto his neighbour **in the word of the Lord**, Smite me, I pray thee. And the man refused to smite him.

In other words, the prophet was not saying “smite me” of his own accord; he was saying it as the prophet of God, and as a direct commandment from God Himself. When the neighbor disobeyed he was actually disobeying God – and the man was killed for his disobedience.

Fortunately, we don't have to worry about committing this type of sin anymore. Things are different in the Church Age; among other things, there are no prophets of God left. If someone comes up to you and says “God told me to tell you to hit me”, you can safely tell them that they are crazy. In the past God spoke to people in a wide variety of ways, but now He speaks to us through His Son:

Hebrews 1:1: “God, who at sundry times and **in divers manners spake in time past** unto the fathers by the prophets,
2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all

things, by whom also he made the worlds;"

God no longer speaks to us through prophets, dreams, or direct personal revelation. Those days are over. Today if we want to hear the words of God we must read the Bible – for that is the only place where His words can be found.

What we have here is a case where God told someone to hit one of His prophets, and when the man failed to do so he was killed for his disobedience. That surely qualifies as one of the oddest stories in the Bible.

